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ABSTRACT

Three conference papers on American higher education are presented. The first article, "The College in American Education," by Henry Steele Commager, examines the history of American higher education, identifies its major characteristics and how things are changing, and suggests some agenda items for the future. The second article, "Monopoly, Diversity, and Opportunity," by John R. Silber, addresses the lack of planning and over supply of higher educational institutions and the monopolization by state schools, higher income levels of college faculty, faculty unionization, democratic society and elitism, and the need for moral instruction. The third article, "Universities and the State: Securing Responsive and Responsible Academic Freedom," by Sir Frederick Dainton, discusses institutional academic freedom and surveys the mechanisms by which the British University system has addressed this problem. (SW)

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Society for College and University Planning

A series of lectures delivered at the Eleventh Annual Conference of the
Society for College and University Planning
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**The Past,
Present and
Future of
American Higher Education**

Edited by Judyth L. Schaubhut

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Foreword

The past decade has witnessed a parade of solutions to the problems of governing and directing higher education: Structural arrangements have varied from voluntary consortia and collaborative efforts to more sophisticated, often centralized, multi-campus and state systems, while administrative approaches and techniques such as participatory democracy, team building, MBO, PPB, collective confrontation, management systems, resource simulations and many others have received attention. These new panaceas have admittedly made their contribution, but they have also been a disappointment to those who believed the inflated promises of their proponents. Their potential impact has often been further diminished by the confusion between ends and means.

In the mid-1970's, planning has emerged as an idea whose time has come at all levels of higher educational decision-making. However, as a broad concept with varied interpretations and expectations, the process of planning is potentially subject to even greater distortion, exaggeration and confusion than its predecessors. Will it, too, take on cult dimensions, and be viewed as an end rather than the means by which higher education pursues its mission?

The papers presented in this volume, which were delivered in July 1976 at the SCUP II Conference in Washington, D.C., serve to portray the larger context in which planning for higher education can and must occur. In affording us the opportunity to step back—to view the planning role from this perspective—they have assured us that the planning process is not in fact a short-lived solution to the problems of the day.

Perhaps too often in our current attempts to plan we view the planning process as a quasi-rational effort to establish institutional goals and write master plans in order to provide a sense of direction; as the development of a broad institutional strategy and set of guiding principles for achieving goals and objectives; or as a more precise set of techniques or activities which guide institutional decision-making and evaluation of goal achievement. Yet we easily forget to what extent the forms—and perhaps the effectiveness—of institutional or governmental planning may be influenced by our history and traditions, by how wisely and flexibly our planning activity responds to constantly shifting issues and challenges which are often dimly foreseen, or by our own unwillingness to seek new alternatives through examining the experiences of others.

In the following articles, three outstanding scholars—an esteemed historian, an insightful institutional president, and a respected foreign diplomat of higher education—provide us with these valuable perspectives. Professor Commager examines the history of American higher

education, identifies its major characteristics and how these are changing, and suggests some agenda items for the future. In a penetrating analysis, President Silber focuses on major issues in society, in the life of the academy, and in the governmental arena that need to be understood and accepted by the planning community. Finally, Sir Frederick Dainton expresses a concern for the preservation of institutional academic freedom, and surveys the mechanisms by which the British university system has addressed this problem.

While this publication captures the wisdom and insight of these individuals, it accomplishes a good deal more: It provides a benchmark for the broad perspective of planning which the Society has fostered from its inception, and identifies the great challenges of the years to come. What cannot be portrayed, however, is the intensity of personal concern, the wit, and the spirit of optimism which created an atmosphere to which the conference participants responded with genuine enthusiasm.

MARVIN W. PETERSON
MEMBER, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Society for College and University Planning

Preface

A grateful Rome awarded the title of Cunctator (the Delayer) to the general who kept Hannibal at bay while the city regained its strength after a series of reverses. Members of the Society for College and University Planning may be less inclined to gratitude, but the publication of these essays on "The Past, Present and Future of American Higher Education" has been delayed similarly by a series of setbacks in the affairs of SCUP. The problems began immediately after the Society's Eleventh Annual Conference, held in Washington, D. C., July 21-24, 1976. At this date they are not entirely resolved but the publication, albeit belated, of these essays is the most appropriate omen of the Society's resurgence—and of its determination to fulfill its own commitment to American higher education.

The Society, then, mingles its apologies with its gratitude to those responsible for this spirited and stimulating celebration of the Bicentennial. In order of appearance, they are:

H. Gilbert Nicol, then executive director of the Society, who conceived the idea and brought it to parturition;

The Lilly Endowment, Inc., which made a grant for the lectures;

The Ford Foundation, which met the costs of publication and distribution (and which has been equally generous in its patience during the delay);

Judyth L. Schaubhut, who edited the lectures and saw them through the press;

and finally you, the readers, SCUP members and others, who close the Bicentennial circle by reflecting on the past, the present and the prospects for the future that faces higher education planners in these opening years of the Nation's Tercentenary.

JEFFREY HOLMES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Society for College and University Planning

THE COLLEGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

by Henry Steele Commager

Henry Steele Commager pursued his graduate studies in European history at the University of Chicago and, briefly, at the University of Copenhagen. His doctoral dissertation on Struensee and the Reform Era in Denmark was awarded the Herbert Baxter Adams Prize for the best thesis in European history in the year 1928. From 1926 to 1937, Dr. Commager taught American history at New York University. In 1938, he went to Columbia University, where he taught in the Graduate School until 1959. In 1956, Dr. Commager became Smith Professor of History at Amherst College, where he now holds the position of John Woodruff Simpson Lecturer, a chair previously held by Robert Frost and Archibald Macleish.

Dr. Commager has held the Pitt Chair of American History at Cambridge University, the Harmsworth Chair at Oxford University, the Gottesman Chair at Uppsala University, and the Watson Lectureship at London University, and has taught at a number of other European and Latin American universities. He is an Honorary Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, and an Honorary Professor at the University of Santiago de Chile, and has received 37 honorary degrees from universities here and abroad.

In 1972, Dr. Commager was awarded the Gold Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Among his numerous books are: Theodore Parker; The Growth of the American Republic, with Samuel Eliot Morison; Documents of American History; Majority Rule and Minority Rights; The American Mind; The Blue and the Gray; Search for a Usable Past; Was America A Mistake?; The Commonwealth of Learning; Britain Through American Eyes; The Defeat of America; and Essays on the Enlightenment.

Of all American institutions, it is probably the school, at every level from elementary to high and higher, that has most faithfully reflected the shifting purposes, desires, expectations, objectives, triumphs and failures of the American character; that has therefore most faithfully conformed to what might be considered the national norm and has, indeed, largely fashioned that norm. This is true even though no other major institution, except the church, owes more to inheritance than does the institution of education. For two centuries it was intellectually in thrall to the Old World. The philosophy that animated it was inherited, the substance of the curriculum was largely carried over, the methods of pedagogy were reproduced from Britain and, in the 19th century, from the continent. The very names which we apply to the various stages of education reflect this: kindergarten from the German, grammar school from England, high

school from Scotland (where it originally meant the school on the High Street), the normal school, an absurd adoption of a French term for a German institution, the seminary, the college, and the university, all terms that trace their lineage to the Middle Ages. As best they could, Americans adapted their schools to these categories; as best they could they adopted, too, the curriculum thought suitable for a very different kind of education in different societies.

Yet from the beginning, environment—not just the physical environment, but the new religious, social and even moral environment—modified the inheritance, and transformed it. The adaptation was not so much intellectual as structural, but the new demands, represented in the structural organization of schools, quickly reacted on and transformed the intellectual character of inherited education as well.

Those new demands—or needs—were imposed by an environment which required competence to deal with the bewilderingly new practical circumstances of life, and with the even more important social and political environment, which took for granted a larger degree of independence in the realms of religion and of government, and of equality in society, than had been known in the Old World.

It was not merely that in the New World almost everything of a practical character had to be learned anew: climate, soil, flora and fauna, diseases and their remedies, new ways of farming, new tools, even a new arithmetic (for, as Crèvecoeur observed, here a hundred miles was what a mile was in the Old World). Even more important, within a short time almost everything was to be new socially: legal equality for all whites, slavery for blacks, social equality for most whites, political equality for larger numbers than elsewhere on the globe, freedom from an established church and eventually complete religious freedom (and with it burgeoning denominationalism), the notion that men could now divorce themselves from their past and make their own institutions, and—with independence—the no less revolutionary notion that the schools might be the instrument of such far-reaching changes. Thus the idea, long typically American but now widely accepted, that the function of schools was not merely (perhaps not even primarily) to train the mind, but rather to serve the larger interest of society: to nationalize, to Americanize, to democratize, to reform. And this principle, which we associate with Jefferson and with John Dewey a century later, seeped upwards, as it were, to so-called higher education. For, more than elsewhere, education in America has been an almost seamless web. Perhaps nothing illustrates this more sharply than the broad consideration that whereas in the Old World secondary education (the public school, the grammar school, the lycée, the gymnasium) attached itself to the university, in the New World colleges

attached themselves to the high school, and the university, when it came, attached itself to the college. Let us begin with the college.

We are confronted at the very threshold with the elementary fact that the college is an American institution—almost an American invention—unknown elsewhere in the world until our own day. In the Old World (and its outposts) higher education was confidently assigned to universities, and in Europe the public schools of England and the lycées of France performed the tasks assigned to our colleges.

Why did Americans invent the college as an institution of higher education? The immediate explanation is that Harvard emerged at a moment when the Colleges of Cambridge and Oxford had taken over from the universities, and that Harvard was rooted in Emmanuel College, which had a very special Puritan foundation. The deeper reason is that Americans, in the Colonial era, were simply not prepared to create or maintain universities. Indeed they were not prepared to do this for another two centuries or more—not until the 1860's and the 1870's, those remarkable decades when Tappan tried (in vain) to make a real university in Ann Arbor, when Andrew Dickson White put the stamp of his personality on the new Cornell, when Eliot transformed Harvard, and when Gilman made of The Hopkins the first real university in the United States.

When Americans did finally create universities, they did not substitute them for colleges, but added them atop the colleges. The two were not integrated, as at Oxbridge, but were cumulative, as it were. What this meant was that for a long time the college remained attached to the secondary school, and the university was attached to the college as a grown-up version of the college.

The American college is an indigenous institution, like so many in education that we take for granted: tuition, private universities, the multiversity, course-centered curriculum, professional athletics, etc. It should not be taken for granted but needs explanation. It developed as a special kind of institution, heretofore unknown to education; it has performed special functions not called for in other societies; it bears special stigmata.

All this was logical enough in the 18th and 19th centuries. Is it logical in the 20th century? Will it retain its validity in the 21st?

Let us consider the special characteristics of the American college.

First: For almost three hundred years the college was designed to be terminal. It was all the education the young were going to get—in America at least. In a simple society, young men (there were very few college-bourne women until after the Civil War) could embrace careers in law, medicine,

architecture and teaching with only a B.A. degree—and for a long time even without that. Additional training was obtained on the job, as it were: Not a bad idea, either, as those from Britain well know, for there it still obtains in law and medicine.

Second: The college was designed, in the 18th and much of the 19th century, for very young men. It was in many respects what our preparatory schools are now. Thus John Adams was fourteen when he went to Harvard, Francis Hopkinson twelve when he was admitted to the College of Philadelphia, John Jay fourteen when admitted to King's College in New York, and Jefferson a rather mature sixteen when he went down to Williamsburg to the College of William and Mary; a really bright lad like John Trumbull could be admitted to Yale at the age of seven, though he had the decency to wait until he was eleven before he attended.

And this leads to a *third* quality which distinguishes the American college from the university: the practice of *in loco parentis* by the college authorities. This was logical if students were indeed children. It was logical, too, if the primary function of the college was not to train the mind but to develop character: And that was a position which even President Eliot of Harvard was prepared to defend.

In the Old World the function of universities was to train students—mostly adult—for careers in law, medicine, the ministry and philosophy or scholarship, and, in England, to encourage (rather than train for) public service. Americans assumed that these things would take care of themselves once the young were properly nourished in Christian morality and exposed to a smattering of knowledge. In the 18th century that assumption was not wholly unsound; by the 20th it has become increasingly suspect.

Fourth: Certainly in the late 19th and the 20th centuries, college served another function unknown to the universities of the Old World: It was one of the devices or institutions whereby Americans prolonged youth for their children and, vicariously, for themselves. It is a familiar story. For almost two centuries now, Americans have committed themselves to the ideal of the prolongation of youth. Students fresh out of some academy or high school were clearly too young to marry, too young for a career, too young to face the grim realities of life. Let them then enjoy four golden years in a college where they might pick up some knowledge, some manners, perhaps a patina of culture and a mate. The "four golden years" are part of the myth of the pursuit of happiness. College was to be a buffer against life; it was to be dedicated to play, to friendship, to love. Its image—certainly in the 20th century—became that of the fraternity and the sorority, the football field (à la the now-forgotten Ralph Henry Barbour), the ivy on the walls and the ever-green lawns, and the prom; forever innocent, the engagement and marriage came later. An image

unmarred, this, by serious intellectual pursuits, or by exposure to those dangerous ideas that might prove so embarrassing later in life.

Fifth: Until my own generation, the college (and in a different sense the university) performed a purpose one might suppose more characteristic of the Old World than of the New: that of placing a stamp of distinction—we would now say of elitism—on those fortunate enough to be associated with it. We are accustomed now to mass higher education: The current number enrolled in institutions that call themselves higher is around ten million. But a hundred years ago, when the population of the nation was about forty million, only 52,000 students attended college; even as late as 1900, when the population had passed 75 million, the college-university population was less than a quarter million. A college degree had a greater social and economic value then than it has now. It is worth noting that this was not true in the Old World. There, with rare exceptions, attendance at the university did not change the social position of the student. For the most part the aristocracy did not bother with the university. Those who, like a Joseph Banks or an Andreas Bernstorff, did go to the university already had their social position. Those who did not have any position in particular could of course profit from the university: It was an avenue to a position of respectability—in the church, or as tutor or librarian to a duke or a prince—but it did not help you in the least in the army or navy, at the court, or in marriage.

This is the heritage—or part of the heritage—of the American college. It emerged in the late 18th century and multiplied in the 19th century, chiefly under denominational auspices, to do a very special job: to inculcate Christian virtues, and manliness; preserve and hand on some of the literature and learning of the past; provide social and political leadership (economic leadership came mostly from outside the college); prolong youth; and occasionally to excite an interest in scholarship or science or the arts. On the whole it performed these tasks very well. There is no reason to quarrel with S. E. Morison's conclusion that:

For an integrated education, one that cultivates manliness and makes gentlemen as well as scholars, one that disciplines the social affections and trains young men to faith in God, consideration for his fellow man, and respect for learning, America has never had the equal of her little hill-top colleges.¹

He was speaking particularly of the New England colleges, but his observations apply to those of the rest of the country.

There are some analogies, in all this, to the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges of the last century, but more to the Oxford of Zuleika Dobson and the Cambridge of *The Longest Journey* than to the Oxford of

Holdsworth and the Cambridge of J. J. Thompson. There are none whatever to those great German universities to which serious American scholars were even then turning in such large numbers—Göttingen, Berlin, Jena, Freiburg—nor, for that matter, to the Universities of Paris, Uppsala, Utrecht, Leiden, Vienna and Bologna.

This unique American institution, fashioned to serve a simple pastoral society, inculcate piety, train character, suffuse happiness and prepare for public service, is now called upon to adjust to a very different society and to perform very different tasks. It has almost wholly lost its original character; it has not yet found a new character. It is increasingly (like the university, to be sure) a miscellaneous institution performing some of the functions of the high school, some of the university, and some that belong to neither. It cannot return to its original character. Can it find a new character, or has it outlived its usefulness?

The fundamental problem which the American college confronts today is that of its character. The traditional functions of the college are being taken over by other institutions, below and above. The college is squeezed from below by the growing maturity of its better students, and by the emergence of community colleges, now the most rapidly growing segment of American higher education. Students no longer need the kind of education that has long been provided by undergraduate colleges of the great state universities: the repetition of high school subjects, the courses in remedial reading and remedial arithmetic, elementary languages, and survey courses in almost everything, that tend to rot the brain. Our better colleges—and all of them should be among the better—are moving towards the Old World practice of relegating these things to the secondary school, where they belong. If colleges everywhere simply took for granted that students who apply for admission were able to read and write, and to master the multiplication table, the secondary schools would of necessity meet these demands.

At the same time the college is squeezed at the top by the importunate demands of graduate and professional education and by other forces which assume, or even demand, maturity in students. Already most of the better colleges—which is another way of saying most of those which recognize the intellectual obligations of their role—are, in a sense, preparatory, sending 75 to 90 percent of their graduates on to graduate or professional schools. What we have here is a frank recognition of the demands which modern society and government make upon those who would serve them. For the college today is what the high school was fifty years ago. It cannot, in the nature of things, prepare its graduates for the complex demands of society—in law, medicine, engineering, architecture,

social services, administration, the sciences, the arts—we could go on and on. Adequately to work in most of these areas requires the kind of specialization that can be found only in the universities or comparable institutions. And the demand for expertise will not diminish but increase.

What this means is that if we persist in the pattern of four years of college—normally from 18 to 22—and add on to that the requirement of three to five or six years of professional study, we will find ourselves with two problems. One is that society, by one means or another, will have to support a very large body of young people until they are closer to thirty than to twenty (support them, that is, for something like twenty years of schooling) before it begins to get any return from its investment. The second is that those who will proceed to the positions of authority and power will already be on the road to middle age before they embark upon their careers.

We rejoice now in a most remarkable extension of life expectancy: It is probably roughly twice that of two centuries ago. Yet it is an illusion that we get twice as many years of service as did the generation of Franklin and John Adams and Jefferson. The average age of those who wrote the great revolutionary documents—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution—was younger by many years than is the age of those who guide our destinies now in the halls of Congress. What we have gained at one end of the spectrum we have lost at the other. The gain may be in wisdom and judgment and experience, although that has not always been apparent these last years; what we have lost is boldness and imagination. How sobering to reflect that every great political and constitutional institution which we now boast was invented before the year 1800, and that none has been invented since that year!

Imagine anyone writing now what Joseph Priestley wrote in the dedication of his lectures on *First Principles of Government* (in 1768), which addresses itself to young men who "having reached the age of fifteen are now ready to step forth and take their place on the great stage of public affairs."

If the college finds itself pressed at both ends, what is left for it? What can the college do in the first two years that cannot be done equally well in a good secondary school, and that is, in fact, done equally well in most European secondary schools? What can it do in the last two years that is not better done at a university or a professional training school or—for President Hutchins had a point here—in a law office, a hospital, an architect's office, or a library?

Perhaps the beginning of insight here is to make clear what a college is not, or should not be. Then we may be able to discover what it is or should be.

First, the college is not a preparatory school, and should not teach preparatory school subjects, nor nourish preparatory school attitudes towards social or intellectual life. It should not treat its students as if they were adolescents. Colleges are, to be sure, rapidly abandoning *in loco parentis*, but in many respects they still persist in treating their students as if they were children. The college should relegate play and game, to the students themselves, which means that it should do away with professional and semi-professional athletics. There is no reason why any college or university should waste its resources on stadia, on a galaxy of high-priced coaches, on athletic scholarships—an oxymoron if ever there was one. Nor should colleges waste their resources on “remedial” reading or arithmetic. The task of teaching students to read and write and multiply belongs to the elementary and secondary schools, not to the college or university. In the academic arena they should move away from secondary school habits and attitudes—course requirements, course grades, cumulative credits, required attendance and required reading—and move towards intellectual maturity as tested by the comprehensive final examinations, the only tests, after all, in which society has a legitimate interest.

Second, the college should offer (within the limits of financial resources) everything that is essential to intellectual discipline and to exciting the imagination of the young. It should not impose these offerings on its students, nor should it go to the other direction and respond to every student whim. It should not try to compete with the university. It should not offer courses in everything, or even in everything which students might be interested in. There are, after all, libraries where the student can slake his thirst for knowledge. We recognize this in the realm of law and medicine, etc. We should recognize it likewise in the sciences, history and literature. The college must provide a base for advanced study—that involves imposing on the young the discipline of scientific and scholarly work habits—but it should not itself provide such study: That is the job of the university. There is nothing new about this; quite the contrary. It is a return to the practices of the lycée and the gymnasium. It is a return to the earlier character of the American college—that of teaching (and teaching thoroughly) languages and mathematics, philosophy and science, and providing the facilities for study and the atmosphere in which the young can achieve maturity.

You will indulge me in a further word, here, on the tyranny of courses—one of the major problems of American higher education. Almost the whole of America has succumbed to this tyranny: We cannot make love or get married without taking courses on the latest findings of Masters and Johnson; we cannot even meditate by ourselves. It is no wonder that the young cannot read the poetry of Wordsworth or study Black literature or contemplate the destruction of the environment

without taking courses on all of these subjects and interests: The teacher is forced to conclude that Gutenberg lived in vain. It is, I think, not inappropriate to recall that the generation of the founding fathers, who were trained (those who attended college) exclusively in Greek and Latin, mathematics, and natural and moral philosophy, somehow managed to solve most of the great problems that confronted them and to produce statesmen who understood the world about them, while our own generation, subjected to formal—even to “required”—courses of study on every conceivable subject, is unable to understand other peoples and cultures, to solve the problems which glare upon it, or to invent new social or political institutions.

Third, the college is not a social service agency—nor, for that matter, is the university. Both should of course serve the community, but the community they are to serve is not the immediate and the local community: There are other agencies to fulfill this service, chiefly governmental. The community which the college and university are to serve is the great community of learning which stretches back two thousand years, and forward for such time as modern science and atomic weapons vouchsafe us. It is not the local community, nor even the national, but embraces the whole world of science and learning, and the whole well-being of mankind. It is proper that universities should provide the doctors, lawyers, theologians and philosophers whom they have traditionally provided, and proper too that they should provide the teachers, engineers, social workers and psychiatrists that our own society needs. But it is not the responsibility either of the college or of the university to serve the immediate needs of the business community, or even of government—I emphasize the term *immediate*. The college and university are required to educate those who can be trained to serve these and comparable interests, but they are not themselves primarily training schools. Those who control the college should keep steadily in mind that in matters of philosophy, politics, economy and the arts, a straight line is not the shortest distance between two points. A reading of Thucydides—I have in mind his account of the Sicilian Expedition—might have served the Johnson Administration better in its Southeastern Asia policy than all the contributions of the best and the brightest trained in international politics. It is difficult to believe that the students of Jowett's Balliol, or for that matter of President Tyler's Amherst, would have been guilty of the errors of judgment and of morality which afflicted those products of the most modern education who guided the destinies of the country under Mr. Nixon.

The college has been, and still is, central to higher education in America. It is even, in most of our great universities, the tail that wags the university dog. That in the past it has played an essential and on the whole a

beneficent role cannot be denied. Is it still central? Is the role it plays still beneficent?

Certainly no one who surveys the American scene can deny that it is still central: The millions of young men and women who pour into the campuses of Ohio State and Michigan State, of Temple and Boston University and their hundreds of sister institutions, are not ready for the university. Perhaps a more enlightened and rigorous system of secondary education might make them more nearly ready—that is a problem I shall not discuss. Perhaps, too, most of the colleges (I have in mind not Swarthmore or Bryn Mawr, Oberlin or Pomona, but the colleges of the great urban universities such as the New York City system with its two hundred thousand undergraduates, or the colleges of our great state universities from Ohio State to Texas) might in time be taken over by the rapidly expanding community colleges, which may become not only college preparatory but university preparatory. There is no logical reason why American students cannot go directly from the high school or the community college to the university: After all, if Scottish, German, Danish and Dutch students can go directly from secondary schools to universities, why cannot Scottish, German, Danish and Dutch boys and girls in America do the same? But I know that there are many reasons which are not rooted in logic, but in history and sociology, and we must address ourselves to reality. Improvement of secondary education, and development of new intermediary institutions like the community colleges or, perhaps, the Danish folk high school, might eventually enable us to substitute the university for the college in our educational hierarchy. But meantime we must deal with reality. What should, or can, be done to adapt the college to the exigencies of our own time and our world?

First, as the college becomes increasingly preparatory, it should forego the luxury or the vanity of considering itself a university in miniature, and concentrate less on formal or professional education—most of which will eventually be absorbed by the university—and more on basic disciplines. Its task is to prepare the young for more specialized education at a later stage, or for intelligent participation in the life of the community. It should cease to compete with the university, and confine itself to more basic, dare I say more philosophical, education.

Second, the college could and should reduce the time necessary for obtaining a degree to three years: That, I need not remind you, is the normal length of university education everywhere in Europe. This would mean earlier concentration on the major area of interest, less time for miscellaneous non-academic activities, and perhaps a longer and more serious academic year. It would have the obvious advantage of getting students to the professional careers while they are still young enough to be bold and resilient. It would save the public a great deal of money and

increase the capacities of our colleges by one-fourth.

Third, the college should permit and encourage its students to get caught up in some special interest at an early stage, and this without discouraging interest in non-professional studies. At present this is almost impossible: Students who wish to go on to professional school do not dare to venture too far from their chosen field of study for fear that the requirements of these amateur courses, as it were, will distract them from their field of concentration, and thus disqualify their chances of admittance to first-rate professional and graduate schools. Doing away with those vestigial remains from the high school—course requirements, attendance, and grades in those areas not central to career preparation—would take care of this problem.

Fourth, the college was, historically, a place which nourished the imagination as well as the mind of the young. The Alfred North Whitehead ideal is still valid: the imaginative communication between the old and the young. College should present to the young valid models of life and, as it is an *educational* institution, primarily philosophical and intellectual models. The ideal was eloquently stated by Learned Hand in his tribute to the Harvard of his day at the turn of the last century:

You came to know that you could hold no certain title to beliefs that you had not won; and indeed you did not win many.... Chiefly and best of all, you were in a company of those who thought that the noblest of man's works was the pursuit of truth; who valued the goal so highly that they were never quite content that the goal they had reached was the goal they were after; who believed that man's highest courage was to bet his all on what was no more than the best guess he could make; who asked no warranties and who distrusted all such; who faced the puzzle of life without any kit of ready-made answers, yet trusting that, if they persevered long enough, they would find—in the words of John Dewey—that they might safely "lean back on things."

Fifth, the college should accommodate itself to the reality of an urban America. In the Old World all universities were located in the capitals of states, or in cathedral cities: thus Bologna, Paris, Leiden, Salamanca, Oxford, Cambridge, Copenhagen, Uppsala, Vienna, and so forth. Because young America had no cities, and because students were very young, and it was thought desirable to remove them from the distractions and temptations of even small cities, most American colleges and universities were located in villages far removed from the bustling centers of life. There were exceptions—the College of Philadelphia and King's College come to mind. (We should, however, remember that Philadelphia was a

city of 25,000, and New York of perhaps 20,000, when these two colleges were founded.) The generalization is valid for most of the 19th century: The rise of the urban university is a 20th-century phenomenon. Even today many of our colleges and universities are located far from the centers of life and of culture. They can overcome this drawback by forming cluster colleges—as with the Claremont Colleges, or those on the fringes of Philadelphia, or the five colleges of the Connecticut Valley—or, where they are part of great universities (as with the University of Illinois, or Michigan State, or Pennsylvania State), by creating their own cultural and intellectual center.

All colleges should seek to drive a gulf stream of public service, and of intellectual and artistic enterprise, through their campuses. This is probably the easiest way to keep before the young the spectacle of greatness, one of the essential functions of any institution that serves them. It is far more important that the student have before him the spectacle of the dignity and excitement of scholarship, artistic enterprise and public service, than that he be offered the most elaborate fare of courses in the most miscellaneous subjects. It was to hear Abelard that students flocked by the thousands to medieval Paris; it was Comenius whom students followed from country to country. Linnaeus doubled the enrollment of Uppsala in a few years, and students came from all Europe to hear a Burckhardt or a Michelet. Even in our own day who can deny that a Moore, a Jaspers, a John Dewey, a Hannah Arendt, or a Robert Frost was worth a wilderness of courses. Every institution of learning, and particularly every college where students are still young, impressionable and imaginative, should try to excite, by its character and its conduct, the ideal which Pericles held up to his fellow Athenians:

Let your eyes dwell upon her (Athens) day by day until love of her fills your hearts and her greatness shall break upon you.⁴

NOTES

1. Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic*, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), 1:514.
2. Joseph Priestley, "Dedication," in *An Essay on the First Principles of Government, and on the Nature of Political, Civil, and Religious Liberty* (London: J. Dodsley, T. Cadell, and J. Johnson, 1768).
3. Learned Hand, "At Fourscore," in *The Spirit of Liberty*, ed. Irving Dilliard (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1960), p. 259.
4. Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.37.

MONOPOLY, DIVERSITY, AND OPPORTUNITY

by John R. Silber

John R. Silber became the seventh president of Boston University on December 17, 1970. At the time of his appointment, he was University Professor of Arts and Letters, Professor of Philosophy, and former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at The University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Silber received an M.A. degree in 1952 and a Ph.D. in 1956 from Yale University. He also attended Northwestern University, where he studied music; Yale Divinity School; and the Law School of The University of Texas. He holds the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from Kalamazoo College and the University of Evansville; and the Doctor of Laws from Maryville College and the College of St. Scholastica.

As a teacher, Dr. Silber has won four awards of recognition, including the Morris Ernst Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Danforth Foundation's E. Harris Harbison Award for Distinguished Teaching. He is an internationally recognized authority on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the philosophy of law.

In 1971, Dr. Silber was awarded the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal from Yale Graduate School Association. Among his numerous publications in the area of ethics and the philosophy of law are: "The Ethical Significance of Kant's Religion;" "Procedural Formalism in Kant's Ethics;" "Being and Doing: A Study of Status Responsibility and Voluntary Responsibility;" "Human Action and the Language of Volition;" and "Television: A Personal View." Several of his works have been included in recent anthologies. Dr. Silber is also the editor of Works in Continental Philosophy, a series published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

1. CONTEXT: THE DUAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

I am very pleased to participate in this conference, and I shall begin by invoking the antipodal patron deities of planning. Standing astride our window on the future like the pillars of Herakles are the immense figures of Herman Kahn and Colonel Blimp. They symbolize the soft underbelly of planning: pretension and error. As we enter an increasingly egalitarian society, Colonel Blimp is surely to become the more popular futurist, preferred alike for his appealing confession of ineptitude and his principled avoidance of linear extrapolations.

Higher education in the United States may be afflicted by a multitude of ills, and even of sins, but one of these is not a surfeit of planning. For the most part, its growth has been dictated by pressure rather than plan. There are kinds of pressure to which we as educators should be glad to yield: pressure to provide equal educational opportunity and pressure growing

from the thirst of an under-educated citizenry for knowledge. But the pressure currently driving the expansion of education in the United States is very different. It comes from contractors, labor unions, and pork-barrelling politicians cooperating to bring into being vast construction projects that stimulate local economies and fill local party treasuries. Unfortunately these do not necessarily fill the educational needs of our people.

Some may argue that effective planning is going on in the state-owned sector, but even there effective planning and coordination are rare, for in most states the planners concern themselves exclusively with the state sector, and proceed as if the independent sector did not exist. They never face the critical issue of planning: the integration of both the independent and the state-owned sectors into a single system of public higher education.

Success in planning, like success in anything else, depends in part on our ability and our willingness to call things by their right names. Unfortunately we routinely miscall independent colleges and universities "private," as if they educated someone other than the public; and we likewise miscall the state-operated sector "public," as if the only public institutions were those that the public owns.

We should not be surprised when spokesmen of the public sector use this terminology, for it is immensely to their advantage. It gives them the rhetorical drop on everyone else in addressing Congressional or legislative committees. Congressmen ask, "Why should the taxpayers support a private institution?" The answer is, of course, that the institution isn't private. But, incredibly, many in the independent sector still describe their institutions as private, and thus allow the continued pre-emption of the term "public" by the state sector.

An independent college is no more private than a turnpike is private. Imagine the fantasy of two super highways side by side. One was built under the federal Interstate Highway program, and the other by a turnpike authority. Functionally, the two are equivalent. They differ only in the way they are financed and governed. No one would call the turnpike a "private" highway, nor consider the Interstate road the only "public" highway.

And it is only in fantasy, or in a reality suffused with stupidity or malfeasance, that one would build an Interstate Highway parallel to an existing turnpike. Which is not to say that this has not happened.

By comparison, the world of higher education is truly Fantasyland. Despite the fact that they generally ignore the existence of a dual system of public higher education that includes both the state and independent sectors, coordinating boards have occasionally been able to limit the civil

wars in the state sector among community colleges, state colleges and state universities, and thus to reduce somewhat the wasteful and eventually self-defeating competition for students and funding. But in almost all of our states, coordinating boards ignore another civil war that continues unabated between the state sector and the independent sector. The battlefields of this war are already panoplied with redundant facilities that impose great waste and needless burdens on the taxpayer. Soon they will begin to be littered with maimed and dying academic institutions whose demise will herald the loss of an essential component in American higher education: the independent sector.

The losses will not be in the independent sector alone, however. The state sector is seriously overbuilt for the significantly smaller numbers of students that will begin to arrive after 1979. Between 1961 and 1975, the annual number of live births dropped from 4.3 million to 3.1 million. At the most conservative estimate, this means that by 1990 there will be 25 percent fewer students in college; that is, approximately 2,500,000 fewer students. The significance of this number will be apparent if we remember that it is the equivalent of 5,000 colleges of 500 students; of 1,700 colleges of 1,500 students; of 500 universities of 5,000 students; or of 50 universities of 50,000 students!

These are sobering figures. They should lead us from any naive temptation to mistake the slight current increase in enrollments for an indication that doomsday has been called off.

The failure to treat higher education as a single system has already imposed immense costs. A flagrant example is the building of the University of Massachusetts Medical School. When this institution was authorized, Massachusetts was already second in the nation in the number of physicians per capita. The three independent medical schools in Massachusetts—Boston University, Harvard and Tufts—were already admitting every Massachusetts applicant who met their standards. If any qualified applicant was prevented from attending, he was prevented only by financial barriers. But these barriers could have been removed simply and inexpensively by subsidizing the tuition of each qualified Massachusetts student in the existing independent medical schools at no more than \$12,000 a year. The independent medical schools in fact offered to educate residents on just these terms. Unfortunately, their leaders spoke very softly, decorously and presidentially, and carried no stick at all. In the absence of vocal and vigorous opposition, the legislators had no reason to resist the lobbyists' pressure: they authorized a state medical school that cost \$136 million to build. Its current operating cost is \$11.2 million; the annual debt service on the cost of its buildings is \$22.3 million. This year, the total cost to the taxpayer for *each* of the 228 students is \$147,000. The

magnitude of this waste is made disturbingly clear when we realize that since the authorization of the state medical school, the three independent medical schools in Massachusetts have, without cost to the state taxpayer, created additional places for more students than will be accommodated in the state school. These places in the independent sector could have been filled by Massachusetts residents at no more than one-tenth the cost of educating them in the state school.

The Massachusetts Folly is now being duplicated at the federal level in the establishment of a federal medical school to train physicians for the armed services. Eighty million dollars has already been appropriated for construction, and the Defense Manpower Commission has conservatively estimated that the eventual total cost for construction, start-up, and ten years' operating costs will exceed \$200 million. The Commission recommended that the medical school be discontinued, and that in its place the Department of Defense procure physicians from existing institutions through a scholarship and bonus program costing approximately \$34,000 per graduate. The Commission estimated that this would save a minimum of \$100 million in building costs and a minimum \$13.7 million annually in operating costs. Regrettably, a Congress that is accustomed to dealing with \$400 billion budgets appears not to have been impressed with these trifling savings. Construction has already begun on the medical school, and in the fall of 1976, it is scheduled to begin operations in temporary quarters.

It should not be thought, however, that I am attacking the principle of state-operated institutions of higher education. Even if I had not myself spent most of my professional career at a state university, I should recognize the Morrill Act as one of the most beneficial and farsighted pieces of legislation ever to have passed the Congress. But the Morrill Act had no provisions for planning and coordination. In 1862, the system of higher education available to our citizens was so inadequate to their needs that no one could have foreseen an age of redundancy. Now that prospect presses upon us, and our lack of planning to meet it is so extreme as to bring us to the edge of chaos.

This lack of planning is manifest in the vicious cycle in which the state sector behaves as if it were a monopolist, setting its prices so low as to undermine the independent institutions with prices they cannot meet. Indeed, as more of their students are attracted by the lower prices in the state sector, the independent institutions must raise their prices still higher. These raised prices then fuel further demand for expansion in the state sector, and the cycle continues.

This state of affairs would make sense only if the state genuinely desired to monopolize higher education, incurring all of the high costs and

assuming all of the losses. There are no profits in higher education, only costs, and it is these costs that the state increasingly monopolizes in the name but not in the interest of the taxpayer. Nationwide, the states must spend between \$2,000 and \$3,000 on each undergraduate student they educate, and they increase the burden on the taxpayers as they encourage the transfer of students from the independent to the state sector.

The fact is that when planners plan for the state sector alone they exclude much of the data on which sound planning depends. It should be no surprise when their best-laid plans "gang agley." In Massachusetts, for another example, the state over the past two decades has embarked on a massive and very expensive expansion of its system of higher education. It has been alleged in justification that this is the only way to extend equal educational opportunity. Now, it should be obvious that when the state creates a place in its system, that place is made available for the same subsidized price to any qualified resident regardless of need. Under such an arrangement, some of the places the state creates are filled not by students unable to pay independent sector tuition, and who would thus go uneducated, but by comparatively affluent students who find tuition at \$500 or less an offer they simply cannot refuse. These students leave independent institutions and transfer themselves to the account of the taxpayer. If an independent institution is lucky, it will be able to recruit out-of-state students to make up the loss. If it is unlucky, it may go bankrupt, possibly transferring all of its students to the taxpayer's account.

These phenomena, which threaten to destroy the immensely valuable resource of the independent sector and to bankrupt our states as they try to replace it, could have been avoided entirely, and even now can be somewhat ameliorated, by an application of planning so elementary that it would hardly arouse the professional interest of the members of this organization.

Construction in the state sector should have been undertaken only to provide programs and facilities not already available. When such programs and facilities were available, the states ought to have extended access to them through scholarship programs. It is far cheaper to lease unused capacity in the independent sector than to build redundant capacity in the state sector. It is also cheaper to expand an existing independent institution than to build a new state institution from scratch.

After the Second World War, the United States did not embark on the construction of federal colleges and universities to educate the veterans. Instead, without duplication or waste, it passed the G.I. Bill, and simply and directly provided veterans with the financial ability to attend the existing colleges and universities of their choice. And the independent sector took on most of this expansion. We can learn from this example. It will be far less

dangerous for both sectors of our system of public higher education if the state adopts the principles of partnership rather than those of monopoly.

Partnership requires state action more nearly to equalize tuition in the state and independent sectors. I am absolutely and resolutely opposed, however, to a policy of equalizing tuition in the two sectors by raising tuition in the state sector. This is at best a protectionist expedient that will decrease rather than increase access and do little to increase choice. Tuition should be equalized by mechanisms that lower tuition in the independent sector. This objective can be best achieved by an extensive scholarship program of the voucher type—a civilian G.I. Bill.

Such a program, though massive, would not necessarily be prohibitively expensive. Each resident of a state now has an entitlement for higher education in the institutions the state operates. The value of that entitlement is easily calculated: it is the cost of education minus the price of tuition. If the cost of education in the state sector is \$3,500 per year and the tuition price is \$500, then each resident has an entitlement of \$3,000 worth of education at the taxpayers' expense. Fortunately for the taxpayer, almost a quarter of our students renounce the entitlement entirely or largely by enrolling in independent institutions. But the present policy in the state sector encourages each resident to consume his full entitlement by enrolling in a state institution, thus creating an artificial "need" for additional state facilities. A wiser policy would be to encourage residents partially to renounce their entitlements and use existing facilities in the independent sector. If the encouragement came in the form of a voucher, the net cost to the state would be the voucher value less the entitlement. A \$1,500 voucher would, for example, reduce the net cost to the taxpayer by \$1,500; that is, it would represent a net *saving* to the taxpayer of \$1,500 per student. The saving would be greater if eligibility for vouchers were tied to financial need. This has been an extremely simplified model, but the principle is clear. A voucher plan is a way to save, rather than cost, the taxpayer money. It is a way to stop the duplication of unneeded facilities.

And it would help to end the vicious cycle that creates an apparent need for construction by intensifying financial incentives for leaving the independent sector.

Let no one say that a voucher system would not work, or that it has very difficult, complex administrative problems associated with it. It has already worked: for the G.I. Bill was in every essential a voucher scheme. It was funded generously enough to let a veteran attend any school to which he could be admitted, and it is generally regarded in company with the Morrill Act as one of the two landmark initiatives in American higher education.

2. MICROCOSM: CHANGES IN THE LIFE OF THE ACADEMY

I want to turn now to the problems internal to institutions of higher

education, to an analysis of some of the more important trends within the academy itself, without regard to the differences that may exist between the state and the independent sectors.

The first of these internal problems concerns the transformation of academics from members of a clergy to a group of comparatively affluent professionals. In 1910, the average salary paid to a full professor was, expressed in 1975 dollars, approximately \$13,000. That is, the average professor made a salary that approximates today's median family income. And, expressed in 1975 dollars, the average salary of a full professor remained remarkably constant over the next four decades, from 1910 to 1950. In that period it averaged approximately \$13,000. But by 1960, it had risen to \$18,000, and by 1970 to \$24,000, again in constant dollars. The AAUP reports that in 1975, counting fringe benefits (most of which had not existed in 1910, when the salary was the full compensation) the average full professor made \$26,576; that is, the academic when he reaches the highest rank of his profession has moved from the national median in real wages to a position in the top ten percent of all incomes. The college teacher may remain, excepting the clergy, the poorest paid of the classic professionals, but he has clearly gained on his affluent rivals. The entry levels for law and the academy are now very close in compensation, and the Department of Labor estimates the average income of all attorneys at very little more than the average for all full professors.

I do not want to be misunderstood here: college faculties by their willingness to accept comparatively low wages have in the past subsidized the development of higher education. This nation has been extraordinarily fortunate in having a professoriate with a primary commitment to its work and only a secondary concern for its material comfort. There is no reason to regret that college teachers now make salaries that approach those of other professionals. But it would be foolish to assume that a profound improvement in compensation has not been accompanied by a profound alteration of attitudes toward work and toward students and colleagues. What lines of causation run between the two changes cannot be determined with assurance. No one should propose to turn back the clock in regard to compensation, but we ought to recognize that if improvement in compensation and attitude-change are causally related, important trade-offs have been made in bringing a measure of affluence to the academy.

The complex implications of this change in status can be summed up in the observation that during the '60's it became possible to make money teaching in college, and some people began to teach in college for no better reason than to make money. This unprecedented occurrence, of transforming significance, has gone largely unnoticed.

Faculty much under 40 years of age have not necessarily been attracted to an academic career by the solitary intellectual life of the scholar or scientist, or by the more gregarious life of the teacher. College teachers, during the first half of the 20th century, could not expect to make much money. They knew that they could not make a salary much above the national average. A person of above-average intelligence, if his motivation had been primarily economic, would simply have rejected an academic career. A decision to become an academic was typically the consequence of one's own intellectual, spiritual and emotional predilections. Someone who enjoyed reading, studying, writing, researching and teaching more than anything else was simply prepared to renounce salary and economic benefits.

When I was an undergraduate, I doubt that three professors in my college knew how to read the Dow Jones reports in the *Wall Street Journal*, or knew what a point in the market was. They were simply not interested, and they had nothing to invest even if they had been interested. That would not be typical of today's academics. The last year I was at The University of Texas, I remember dropping into Merrill Lynch's office where I found more than one faculty member sitting watching the tape go by. The typical academic now enters the profession expecting a salary roughly double the national average, along with the community prestige that goes with affluence. This generation of faculty is thoroughly at home with stock market reports and tax shelters. Highly conscious of economic issues, of the consumer price index, and of the extent to which their salaries have moved above or below it, they are concerned with economic interests that thirty years ago would have been alien to the academic community and considered vulgar. Their change in attitude has been accompanied by profound changes in their availability to students, in their attitude toward teaching assignments, in their enthusiasm for consultation and more highly remunerative research activities, and in protectionist, trade-unionist movements.

It is remarkable that in a profession as highly individualistic as the academic, increasing numbers of individuals willingly prefer to renounce their individuality for the slogans of collectivity.

On an assembly line, there is great similarity in the work done. Installing a windshield in a Ford is not essentially different from installing one in a Chevrolet. Nor is the installation of windshields remarkably different from installing mufflers, tailpipes, wheels, bumpers, headlights.

But the difference between one teacher of American history and another, or one poet and another, or one philosopher and another, or one physicist and another, is profound. Why then do these individuals find fascination in the slogans of the labor movement? Why do many propose to substitute "Joe Hill" for "Gaudeamus igitur" as the university song? It

is not because they can show, as Cesar Chavez and his farmworkers can, that they suffer from alienation and exploitation, those classic abuses on which the labor movement is historically and amply justified. Persons paid substantially in excess of the national average cannot claim exploitation; nor should one be alienated when all that is required of him is to study and teach in that area of intellectual or artistic life in which he himself has declared that he is most interested. Exploitation is not possible when a heavy week rarely requires more than 40 hours of work. Now, admittedly, many—indeed most—talented and serious academics work many more hours a week, but those extra hours are not work required of them by the institution, but by the demands of their own self-development as scholars.

The growing appeal of trade unionism for faculty in American universities and colleges reflects a basic transformation in attitudes of our professors. Their concern is becoming increasingly economic rather than intellectual: they are increasingly more concerned to get ahead relative to the rest of society, to advance materially and economically, than to enjoy the full fruits of their intellectual freedom and isolation from the intrusions of an industrial and business society. They reject scholarly loneliness and the ivory tower. One wonders how many derive their primary enjoyment in life from either intellectual pursuits or the activity of teaching and counseling the young.

It is neither surprising nor accidental that on any given college campus trade unionism is rarely advanced by faculty members of greatest reputation and ability. When the cause of trade unionism for academics is espoused by highly productive and able teachers and scholars, it is usually an expression of political ideology. Among faculty without ideological motivations, however, the faculty union cause is typically led by intellectually mediocre individuals who believe they will profit from supplanting individual merit by union contracts.

Let it be clear that I accept the *right* of any employees to unionize; I am only questioning the *wisdom* of academics in doing so.

3. MACROCOSM: CHANGES IN THE LIFE OF SOCIETY

We would be guilty of gross over-simplification to assert that the motivation behind faculty unionization stems exclusively from an interest in financial and social gains. The success of democracy in America and Europe, which enjoys the benefit of 200 years of liberalism and of industrial technology, has given rise to collectivist and levelling concerns characteristic of a mass culture. This tendency has been described by Ortega y Gasset as "vertical barbarism," and as "the revolt of the masses." But it can with equal validity be described as a counterfeit of basic democratic principles.

As a consequence of our success in extending opportunity through

education we have encouraged not merely the genuine democratic belief that everyone has a right to his own opinion, but also the counterfeit view that anyone's opinion is just as good as that of any other. And we have destroyed the central core of moral instruction, in higher education no less than in primary and secondary education, by accepting as cultural dogma the view that all value judgments are relative and equally valid, which of course follows from the idea that any man's opinion is as good as any other's. The equal validity of individual judgments on subjects of the greatest moral importance is the commonplace fallacy underlying our educational program.

The difference between saying that anyone's opinion is as good as any other's and that everyone has a right to his own opinion is neither obscure nor difficult. Everyone has a right to his own opinion, no matter how wrong, how ignorant, or even how stupid he may be. And he has a legal and political right to express that opinion. But there is no justification for the belief that each person is equal in judgment, in discernment, or in knowledge to every other person. "That all men are born to equal rights is true," said John Adams. "Every being has a right to his own, as clear, as moral, as sacred as any other being has.... But to teach that all men are born with equal powers and faculties... is as gross a fraud, as glaring an imposition on the credulity of the people as ever was practiced...."

As Jefferson recognized, "There is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents." To which Jefferson contrasted "an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents." Natural aristocracy, Jefferson believed, was "the most precious gift of nature." "May we not even say," he continued, "that that form [of government] is best which provides most effectively for a pure selection of these natural *aristoi* into the offices of government?"²

Democracy uncompromised by an ultimately destructive egalitarianism offers the best hope for a society in which the wisest, the best, and the most dedicated are selected for positions of leadership. And those who understand the true nature of our democracy recognize that the members of a legislature, city council, school board, or a congressman, a governor or even a president of the United States, ought to be chosen by democratic processes and in no other way. But as true democrats, we must also recognize that persons elected to these offices ought to be better than average. Can you imagine that Jefferson or Adams or Madison would have been reassured by Mr. Nixon's statement, "I am not a crook"? In full consistency with the principles of democracy, persons elected to these offices ought to be the persons best qualified to hold them. They ought to be better in their intellectual and moral capacity and in their commitment to hard work. This does not mean that they should necessarily be men,

college graduates, middle-class, white, or members of any other specific group. But they should surpass most citizens in the qualifications they bring to the positions they hold.

Unless led astray by the substitution of egalitarianism for democracy, we would not conclude that every institution in a democracy ought to be democratic. That government must be democratic follows from the political faith that finds its justification in the consent of the governed. But it does not follow that other institutions within a democracy should be organized democratically. In fact, most institutions, and certainly all institutions of higher education, ought to be run on an elitist basis. That is, decisions within them ought to be made by those most qualified to make them. When students asked whether they could serve on the Investment Committee of Boston University, I told them that any student who had made as much as \$100,000 on the stock market by his own decisions was welcome to apply for that position. Otherwise they would come to the table lacking the principal qualification: a demonstrated capacity to make money.

That this is not now an elitist society is shown clearly by the existence of serious discrimination against women and minorities. In a society that was genuinely and efficiently elitist, the proportion of women physicians and corporation executives could approach 51 percent. The proportion of blacks in these positions could be as high as 11 percent. That is what a real elitism could mean for this country; we fall short of it through the continuing scandal of our denial of equal opportunity in education and employment.

Through this denial we create a bogus "elite": many of the people in it are less qualified than many who are out. Those who are excluded and deserve to be included have everything to gain from true elitism. It is notable that one rarely finds black educators and black students arguing against high educational standards; rather, they ask for a fair chance to meet the standards required of everyone else. By and large, the opposition within higher education to the maintenance of high standards comes from that group that has the most to lose from a genuine elitism—middle-class whites, who fear downward mobility.*

True elitism is a principle essential to civilized society and to the quality of life. Indeed, life itself may depend upon it. All would agree that the practice of surgery should be restricted to persons of extraordinary knowledge and skill. The term "quack" is sometimes used to describe a physician who fails to meet these elitist standards. No one would give consent to be operated on by a surgeon who intended to poll those in the operating room before deciding on a procedure. We recognize that the surgeon's opinion should prevail without any plebiscite because it is—or

should be—better; that is, it is more competent than the opinion of the nurse, the medical students, the intern, or the patient. Of course it is the patient's decision whether or not to have surgery; but he is not competent to decide how it shall be done.

As long as intelligence is better than stupidity, and knowledge than ignorance, and virtue than vice, no university can be run except on an elitist basis. A university that strives for the commonplace and is content with mediocrity would be roughly comparable to a Supreme Court on which seats were reserved for the mediocre. Thus handicapped, these institutions could not fulfill their mission in society. The blind cannot effectively lead the blind, and the intellectually commonplace cannot provide leadership in education.

The emphasis placed by our forefathers on education derived from their concern to develop a natural aristocracy. Writing in 1717, John Wise, a minister of Ipswich, Massachusetts, quoted Plutarch: "Those persons who live in obedience to reason are worthy to be accounted free: they alone live as they will, who have learned what they ought to will." The writings of Madison, Jefferson and Adams abound in detailed expositions of this principle. They insisted that the value of education could not be exaggerated, precisely because it is the condition on which effective self-government, whether of the state or of the individual, depends. "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free... it expects what never was and never will be," said Jefferson.⁴ Adams wrote: "Laws for the liberal education of youth, especially of the lower class of people, are so extremely wise and useful that to a humane and generous mind no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant." So great was the concern of Adams and Jefferson for education that the former wrote a provision for it into the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the latter drafted and commented on a law to establish public education in Virginia. The former included in his constitutional provision direct legislative support for Harvard College, and the latter founded the University of Virginia.

The education they had in mind was a liberal education, rich not merely in the study of the sciences but also in the study of morals. Adams wrote, "It shall be the duty of legislators and magistrates in all future periods of this commonwealth to cherish the interests of literature and sciences," and to establish institutions that would "countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings, sincerity, good humor, and all social affections and generous sentiments among the people."

These are among the values that Professor Commager enumerated as

the traditional purposes of American higher education. And they have not lost their relevance, although contemporary higher education largely ignores them in its curriculum, and many faculty would be embarrassed to be caught espousing them. In fact, not only were these the traditional purposes of American higher education, but their importance and relevance may be far greater today as the church and the family have declined as effective educational institutions, particularly in the area of morals, and as secondary and primary schools have found that any moral education is too controversial to be seriously pursued.

A democratic society cannot function effectively, however, unless its citizens have the benefit of meaningful education. And a meaningful education presupposes an education in moral principles, an education that prepares parents and children for their adult responsibilities; that is, one that develops the objective claims of morality on every understanding mind, not one that offers a set of social *mores* that are nothing more than affectations to be changed as one passes the border of one country and enters another.

Confusion in the area of morals and ethics is such that faculties today in secondary and primary schools, no less than in the colleges, speak idly of values and their inculcation as if the term *value* in isolation had any significance. A pornographic bookstore exhibits and encourages values quite as effectively as a symphony orchestra. The question is: what values should we inculcate, and on what basis should we prefer one set of values to another?

Under the baleful influence of logical positivism—the most pervasive ideology of the last 40 years in higher education—our colleges and universities generally accepted the view that objective knowledge of facts is possible but that science and social sciences are value-free, and that value-dependent subjects such as the humanities, religion, and art, are incapable of offering any rational justification for their conclusions. All that you can say about a philosophical judgment is that you like it. Values, according to the positivist legacy, are mere Good Housekeeping seals of approval that each individual licks and pastes on whatever object or relation he prefers. The position is self-refuting and intellectually bankrupt. American higher education will be deficient until the position is thoroughly discredited and replaced by a sound education in ethics, morals and values. Logic, legal method, scientific method are not descriptive. They are all normative methods. Logic does not discuss how men actually think but how men ought to think. The study of fallacies is a study of mental pathology—it examines the way men actually think and the way they should not think.

We should not be concerned to inculcate values in general; rather, we

should encourage knowledge of and respect for truth, courage, sincerity, justice and wisdom, and an understanding of what these concepts involve. This calls for something only slightly less comprehensive than a philosophical and cultural renaissance on which a core curriculum can be developed with confidence.

We must, for example, include as a part of a college education a demonstration of the principles of non-parasitism by which the citizens recognize their obligation to sustain and support that society on which they are themselves dependent. A sound college education on which a democratic society depends presupposes instruction in the distinction between right and power and the rational basis for preferring right over power. It matters not whether this demonstration is made in a class in religion that discusses David's relation to Bathsheba and Uriah or in a course in classics that examines Agamemnon's action in taking the prize won by Achilles or in a course in Latin American literature in which the discussion of Gabriel García Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* examines Colonel Buendía's realization that after 20 years of revolution all he had been fighting for was power. Although the rational derivation of the distinction between right and power is rarely articulated, it is quite as objective as any scientific demonstration and no more or less dependent on metaphysical presuppositions than science itself.

By "moral education" I do not mean the propagation of positions, conventional or otherwise, about the *mores* of sex, of drinking, of gambling, or the like. These, although worthy of discussion, are in this context a matter of comparatively low priority. This nation could be a nation either of repressed Puritans or of expressive rakes and still survive. But it cannot survive as a nation unless there is minimal respect for the basic conditions of civilized order.

There is no such thing as civilized chaos. And once a society becomes heavily dependent on the technological sophistication of jet travel, electronic communication, and computers, it becomes possible for anyone with a wire cutter or a monkey wrench to disrupt and ultimately destroy it. There is no way to prevent such disruption with the police; our budgets could not afford their salary, and the freedom of our society could not withstand their omnipresence. Our future and our security and our freedom depend on our own agreement as to the rule of law. They depend on a societal temperance in the conduct of even the most vexed and basic disputes. We must encourage this temperance in our students through moral education. If we do not, we will probably not survive as a people.

Moral education then, is education in this sort of temperance; it is education in self-discipline and in an enhanced understanding of the ethical dilemmas presented by ordinary life. No society that is not

well-grounded in such education can survive as a free society, because a free, self-governed society must be made up of free, self-governed citizens. The university has an important obligation to assist through moral education in the survival of a free society. No university will survive very long in a society that is not itself free.

Moral instruction should be re-introduced into higher education as an essential component. It is a part of our historical legacy and it is essential to self-government.

Our national loss in the decay of moral education is nowhere seen more clearly than in the national confusion of the pursuit of happiness, guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence, with the pursuit of pleasure. In the midst of prosperity, more accurately described as luxury, on a scale unprecedented in the history of mankind, we have come to believe that the pursuit of happiness is reducible to the pursuit of pleasure.

Without the correctives of sound moral instruction our age has developed the ultimate defense of pleasure as a guide to the moral life. Four years ago, a young Californian explained to an audience how she knew that certain of her actions had been right. She said, "I knew it was right because it felt good when I was doing it." She was not explaining her justifications for taking some new drug or for performing a new sexual act. Her name was Susan Atkins, she was a member of the Manson family, and she was describing her horrible justification for the savage murder of seven people.

The criterion of pleasure does not differentiate between higher and lower pleasures, or between good and bad pleasures. Once it is agreed that the criterion is pleasure, pleasure becomes its own justification. Can we think of a better example of the need for widespread public education in morals than the need for clarity on the distinction between the pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of pleasure?

There is little point in planning for the future of American higher education unless it is worth having. It will not be worth having unless educational planners direct their interests beyond external structures and managerial procedures of higher education to include the inner substance of education as well. It must be an essential feature of sound planning to recruit and utilize our most intelligent and sensitive educators in the delineation of a sound core curriculum on which the purpose and meaning of higher education and democracy are ultimately dependent.

NOTES

1. John Adams, "Letters to John Taylor," in *The Political Writings of John Adams*, ed. George A. Peek, Jr. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1954), p. 201.
2. Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813," in *Crusade Against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education*, ed. Gordon C. Lee (New York: The Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1961), p. 162.
3. John Wise, "A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches, 1717," in *The Great Quotations*, ed. George Seldes (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1961), p. 604.
4. Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to Colonel Charles Yancey, January 6, 1816," in *Familiar Quotations*, ed. Emily Morison Beck, 14th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 473.
5. Adams, "Thoughts on Government," in *Adams*, p. 91.
6. Ibid., "The Constitution of Massachusetts, 1780, Chap. V (VI), Section II," p. 103.

UNIVERSITIES AND THE STATE: SECURING RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE ACADEMIC FREEDOM

by Sir Frederick Dainton

Sir Frederick Dainton graduated from Oxford University in 1937, and received his Ph.D. from Cambridge University in 1940 for work carried out under the supervision of R. G. W. Norrish. He remained in Cambridge as Humphrey Owen Jones Lecturer in Physical Chemistry and Fellow of St. Catharine's College until 1950, when he became a professor in the University of Leeds. In 1965, Sir Frederick was named Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham University. In 1970, he returned to the field of chemistry as Dr. Lee's Professor in the University of Oxford, a chair which he vacated upon becoming Chairman of the University Grants Committee in 1973.

Sir Frederick is the holder of 15 honorary degree in Great Britain and abroad, and has foreign memberships in a number of overseas academies, including the American Academy of Arts and Science. He has received the Davy Medal of the Royal Society, the Tilden Medal of the Chemical Society, and the Thomson Medal of the Radiological Society. He is also an Honorary Fellow of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge and St. John's College, Oxford.

In addition to assuming the presidencies of the Faraday Society, the Chemical Society, and the Association of Radiation Research, Sir Frederick has served as member and chairman of numerous government committees, and has held various visiting professorships. He has been Arthur D. Little Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Baker Lecturer at Cornell University, Reilly Lecturer at Notre Dame University, and Boomer Lecturer at Alberta University.

How, in an era of mass higher education, can the universities best meet the needs of the nation which is a representative democracy, and of which they form a part?

The problem is that universities have duties, such as the pursuit of truth and excellence, and the furtherance of the personal development of the individuals who comprise the student body, which over the centuries they have come to perceive rest on the acceptance of certain universal, permanent values. Governments, on the other hand, whether civic, state or federal, are the major providers of resources, and are concerned with power, for the retention of which they must respond to pressures both national and sectional, founded on feelings which are often ephemeral and sometimes irrelevant to the real issues.

The need for public funds to flow into universities therefore creates an uneasy interface between them and Government in which there is

ample scope for misunderstanding, for collision between fundamental principle and political expediency, and for confusion between genuine *needs*, rationally identified, and transient *wants*, emotionally felt.

To see the issues a little more clearly, let us first take a look at the history of universities in the Western World.

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In nearly all countries the education of young adults, other than through the various apprenticeship schemes needed by artisans, developed mainly through the universities. The early universities in Europe were established primarily to train for and to certify fitness to enter the professions of Law, Church and Medicine. Initially they were not notably places of scholarship. Scholars were to be found living contemplative lives in monasteries. Scholars and teachers had to be prepared to be mobile so that when life became intolerable by oppression they could migrate to found new institutions.

Scholars fled from Bologna to Paris, and from Paris in the 13th century sprang Oxford and later Cambridge. These two universities in England remained closed communities with religious entry tests, jealously defending and enlarging their territories, possessions and temporal powers. Like all such institutions, they were relatively isolated from society so that nepotism and corruption within their ancient walls found a hospitable environment. It was not surprising that Edward Gibbon* could write truthfully of the Fellows of Magdalen College Oxford that they were "decent, easy men who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the Founder."¹ Referring to his own experience at that College, Gibbon wrote: "I spent 14 months at Magdalen College; they proved the most idle and unprofitable 14 months in my whole life."²

Not that matters were much better in New England about that time. In 1773, John Trumbull of Connecticut complained:

Ignorance wanders unmolested in our Colleges, examinations are dwindled to mere forms and ceremony and after four years dozing there no-one is ever refused the honours of a degree on account of indolence and insufficiency.³

Apart from private medical schools, the first substantial secular institution to be founded in England was Univeristy College London in 1826; later, in the provinces, very often in response to local initiatives, civic university colleges were founded in Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds,

*If quotation from Gibbon two times in as many sentences seems excessive to an American reader, perhaps he will ponder the temptation presented by the fact that 1976 is the bicentenary of the publication of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as well as that of the Declaration of Independence!

Nottingham and Newcastle. Whilst these institutions retained a notion of preparation for the professions, they also introduced the idea of service to the local community, particularly by preparing their graduates for work in local industry and commerce, and by the application of science and technology to these enterprises. In return the local communities nourished the university with gifts of money, land and buildings, and expected to be represented on their governing bodies.

The idea of the Founders of these institutions paralleled that articulated by Professor Tyler of Amherst, who in 1856 said that the American College and its community Trustees constituted:

*A magnetic chain of reciprocal influences, by which light flashes from the College to the community, and life streams back again from the community to the College, so that while the College redeems the community from the curse of ignorance, the community preserves the College from an undue tendency to monkish corruption and scholastic unprofitableness.*⁴

I suspect that if this sentiment had been articulated in my native Yorkshire it would have been expressed with less colour and greater brevity!

However Scotland, which by the 16th century had four universities of some renown, had by the 19th century established open access to the public based on an unusually and universally high degree of literacy instilled by the devoted country or town school-master. These universities emphasised practical subjects such as economics, medicine, law and divinity—even the last named being regarded as “practical” in the sense that it was a preparation for serving the spiritual needs of the people. Professors were valued for what they *knew* about a single subject, and by the audience they could attract, and therefore the size of their fee incomes.

So by the 19th century the Scottish universities could hardly have been more different from Oxford and Cambridge where, at this time, the ideal was to provide a common social, moral and intellectual experience for the sons of the ruling class. In these—the two oldest of our provincial universities—the content of the subject was not so important as the mental discipline that its study was supposed to develop. The graduates of Oxford and Cambridge were expected not merely to enter the professions, but to accept any responsibility put upon them with the effortless superiority of the Balliol man. In increasing numbers they became administrators of a far-flung empire upon which it was believed the sun would never set; thereby attracting the remark of the American that the sun would never set on the British Empire because one could not trust a Balliol man in the dark!

On the European continent a different model was beginning to

emerge which was primarily Germanic. In that country there had been the Humboldtian revolution which institutionalised research. It stressed scientifically conducted enquiry—even in the humanities—which aimed to enlarge knowledge. Although the university served other functions, including teaching those who were persistent enough to take what was offered by the researching professor (who taught really to attract disciples to his field of study and to certify people as competent to enter respectable careers), the prime goal of the professor was to research at the frontier, then to publish, and only secondarily to recruit apprentices whom he could certify, as it were, “on the side.”

I will not presume to expatiate on the history of the American universities other than to emphasise, firstly, the early rejection of the Oxford elitist ideal, so that even Yale (noted more for its conservatism at the time) could issue a report in 1828 stating: “Our republican form of government renders it highly important that great numbers should enjoy the advantages of a thorough education.”

Secondly, I would mention the early absorption into your universities of the German ideal of encouraging research and letting students choose through the “free elective” system which professor talking about his research specialty they would go and listen to. The State universities and the land grant colleges retained much more of the Scottish “practical service” ideal, but soon discovered that scientific knowledge was the only sound basis for practical service. The consequence of these two movements in the United States was that the research idea became very pervasive in all universities of any stature, and created an entirely new structure of prestige, which in turn led to the establishment of graduate schools and the structured Ph.D. course.

It is a curious quirk of history that the Ph.D. degree was later imported into Britain in the 20th century to meet the desire for certification of American graduates studying in England; an importation whose repercussions still echo in the newest British university.

During the 20th century, the universities in Britain found themselves subject to forces and influences which were very often acting in contrary directions. On the one hand, the desire to carry out research (based on the wish either to become more prestigious, or to ensure that the teaching, especially in science and technology, would enable the university better to meet the needs of the locality or the nation by producing graduates well versed in the latest knowledge) was also a force tending to make universities look beyond their own national boundaries and to feel part of an international community of learning.

On the other hand, the fact that the universities themselves provided full-time instruction for only a very small fraction of 18-year-olds was the

cause of their deliberate provision of day and evening part-time courses for young adults—who could secure by this means either external London degrees or degree-equivalent qualifications offered by learned societies—and the provision of opportunities for older adults to attend tutorial classes and the like organised by the extramural departments. These activities, and the fact that many of the full-time day students lived at home and after graduation obtained jobs in the neighborhood, helped to keep the links between universities and their regions strong and healthy. The universities could not meet all these demands for higher education, and other institutions which are outside the remit of my talk have become very numerous in Britain.

THE BRITISH UNIVERSITY: A MODERN PERSPECTIVE

I do not wish to weary you by a recital of statistics. Excluding the non-university students, we now have almost one-tenth of the age group entering universities defined as independent institutions of higher education enjoying the protection of a Royal Charter.* In the post-World War II era, both the per capita and the total costs of the university system have, as in your country, escalated enormously. The State has therefore entered the affairs of the universities as their major paymaster, and its willingness to grant money depends on how the politicians see the universities serving the nation. The *idea* of a *university* therefore has to be justified, and as I see it, has two parts; first, duties and secondly, privileges.

The *duties* of universities are manifold. Prominent amongst them is the conservation of knowledge. Increasingly universities are the store-houses, the data-bases which modern societies need for their functioning; often they are the custodians of great libraries, of art collections, of scientific instrument collections, or of specimen collections of national significance. But the people who live and work within them have not only this duty of conservation of the past, they also have to evaluate and re-evaluate all this knowledge in a modern context—an activity we sometimes call scholarship. Another major obligation is to transmit to the young the knowledge and wisdom of the old, and in particular to offer the young a very attractive invitation to learning. To advance knowledge by acquiring new information is yet another task. Finally, the universities have a duty to certify the young who are judged successful in having reached a certain standard; very often this certification (as in medicine, dentistry, veterinary studies and teaching) carries with it a licence to practice.

These are all considerable responsibilities which can only be dis-

*Ninety percent of these entrants graduate successfully three or four years later.

charged if the universities have certain *privileges*, which include the freedoms to choose whom to admit as students, what to teach (*lehrfreiheit*), what to research on and whom to appoint as teachers and researchers. If universities were ever to lose the unfettered freedom in teaching and research, then the well of constructive criticism of our society and its institutions would begin to dry up, and our society would be much the poorer for it. Fortunately for Britain, these freedoms of the universities are enshrined in their Royal Charters.

THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE

By now you will have perceived the problem. On the one hand, the universities are independent, self-governing institutions, free to conduct their own affairs and not subject to legislative control or Ministerial decree. On the other hand, they depend upon the State for the greater part of their funds,* and they play an important part in the development of national policies and of the economy.

In this situation, if the normal methods of control of Government expenditure are not to be applied, there is a need for some intermediary between the State and the universities. There has to be some machinery which will enable public funds to flow into the universities without direct governmental intervention—and which will reconcile the interests of the State as paymaster and the requirements of national policy on the one hand with the proper academic freedom and autonomy of the universities to which I have referred on the other. The machinery adopted in Britain for this purpose, and endorsed by successive governments of all parties, is the University Grants Committee.

The UGC is a rather strange body, and it is therefore not surprising that there are many prevalent misconceptions concerning it. A medical professor was recently heard to say in exasperation:

Extracting erythrocytes from granite (i.e., extracting blood from a stone) was mere child's play compared to obtaining funds from the University Grants Committee. It seems to be a mysterious body, and must meet in conditions of great secrecy. I know not when, but probably at dusk!

Let me begin to dispel the mystery.

Constitutionally, the Committee is rather a strange creation. It is not a statutory body, and there is no legislation governing its existence. It was established by the issue of a Treasury minute in 1919. Its members—at

*In 1971-74, 76 percent of all income of British universities from all sources was derived from the University Grants Committee.

present 21 in all—are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science after consultation with the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales. They are nearly all university staff members, with a small number drawn from industry and from other sectors of education. Only the Chairman is full-time; the other members are active in their own professions but devote about a fifth of their time to the business of the Committee. There are no Vice-Chancellors (Presidents) among the membership, and when a member is appointed as a Vice-Chancellor he resigns from the University Grants Committee. Members serve in an individual capacity and not as representatives; but the membership is spread over universities of different kinds (ancient, federal, new civic, old civic, technological and new “plate-glass” universities) in different parts of England, Scotland and Wales, and also across a wide variety of academic disciplines. Appointments are entirely non-political.

The Committee meets every month except August, with occasional extra meetings, and it regularly goes on “visitations” (an unfortunate term redolent of the plague!) to groups in every university in the country in the course of five years. The Committee is supported by specialist Sub-Committees under the chairmanship of individual members of the Main Committee, and these committees give advice to the Main Committee on matters concerning academic or other areas for which they are responsible. The Committee is supported by a small full-time staff—just over 100 in all—including typists, messengers and doorkeepers. It is not the enormous bureaucratic octopus that many people suppose, nor has it grown at all in the last ten years. It is in fact smaller than any of the enterprises I have been called upon to manage since the age of 34.

The original terms of reference of the Committee were extended in 1946, and today they read:

To enquire into the financial needs of university education in Great Britain; to advise the Government as to the application of any grants made by Parliament towards meeting them; to collect, examine and make available information relating to university education throughout the United Kingdom; and to assist in consultation with the universities and other bodies concerned, the preparation and execution of such plans for development of the universities as may from time to time be required in order to ensure that they are fully adequate to national needs.⁶

The Committee thus faces two ways, although I hope you will not regard it as two-faced in another sense. Our relationships with Government are, of course, confidential, and you will not expect me to comment

on them, though I am tempted to say that there must be occasions when Government thinks of the UGC in the words of the Book of Daniel:

Then the King ordered Ashkenaz, his chief eunuch, to take certain of the Israelite exiles who were to be young men of good looks and without fault, at home in all branches of knowledge, well-informed, intelligent and fit for service in the Royal Court.... the King assigned them meat and wine and they returned to him at the end of three years.⁷

If "men" is replaced by "persons," and if for "wine" one reads "resources," and for "three years" substitutes "five years," and adds at the end of the sentence "like Oliver Twist for more," one has a fairly accurate description of the UGC!

The time has come to ask how the UGC has survived without the protection of an Act of Parliament, and why it has been much studied and often copied overseas. I think the answer must be because it has proved not merely convenient but necessary to both Government and universities alike. On the one hand, it relieves governments of assuming direct responsibility for universities, and on the other, it safeguards universities from political interference, to quote a recent foreigner's assessment.

I firmly believe that the most important elements in the UGC procedures are the block grant and the quinquennial cycle, within which annual line-item budgeting finds no place. It is these two elements which, although the proportion of universities' resources which comes from the State has steadily increased, have more than anything else preserved the autonomy of the universities. It is of course inevitable and right that the commitment of public funds should be planned more systematically in relation to objectives defined by public policy, which in turn fit into wider Government policy for higher education as a whole. This firmer planning framework, and Parliament's check on the achievement of Government's planning objectives, have meant change and development in the role of the University Grants Committee.

But the Committee have steadily maintained, and Governments have steadily supported, the principle of allowing universities maximum freedom to determine their own policies within a minimum framework of public control. (In passing I should record that not every Parliamentarian accords to the UGC system that esteem in which it is held by many foreigners. Criticisms are from time to time heard, and as recently as May 1976 a Private Member's motion "to bring higher education under proper democratic control"—whatever that may mean—was only narrowly defeated.)

The Government's responsibility is to determine the scale of the

university system they wish to have in relation to other sectors of education, and the general level of support they are prepared to give. The Committee's responsibility is to determine the broad scale of the contribution to be made by each university, to estimate and to provide the resources needed for that contribution, to ensure that there is enough co-ordination of effort to avoid gaps or wasteful duplication, and to give universities advice on national trends and needs, to help them with their own planning. Within this framework, the aim is that universities should be free to develop their own ideas.

That is the theory; the practice depends for its success on the quinquennial system and the block grant, which is basically a deficiency grant to enable each university to achieve objectives of its own choice submitted to and agreed with the UGC. The Government determines at five yearly intervals the scale of the support it can give, which now amounts to about 70 percent of the total income of the universities. The Committee then calculates the appropriate recurrent grant for each university, and the grant is paid monthly as a guaranteed income on which, in normal circumstances, the university can rely throughout the whole quinquennium. The amount of the grant is built up from a detailed consideration of each university's needs and commitments in terms of salaries, maintenance and running costs of all kinds, but once that total is reached by this method the detailed calculations are rubbed out.

There is no earmarking of the money except in very exceptional circumstances, and nothing at all approaching the line-item budgeting so common in other countries. The University is informed only of its total grant as a block, and it is quite free to allocate the expenditure whatever way it likes; but in so doing it recognises that it will not receive further grants from the UGC to eliminate any deficits which it incurs. Equally, the UGC will not steal any surpluses achieved either by prudent husbandry or by private benefaction. There is thus a heavy responsibility on each university fully to manage its own affairs and to develop its own plans, and this responsibility liberates a latent inventiveness and ingenuity amongst all the senior members of the university as well as generating tautness in its economical management.

The Committee does, of course, make other kinds of grants. For example, grants are made for furniture and equipment, which are also on a five-year basis, and in addition for new buildings, which are on an annual basis. I do not wish to comment on these further because they are of minor importance compared with the block grant.

So far I have dealt largely with generalities, but you are practical persons; and if, in the words of the late W. S. Gilbert, I am to give verisimilitude to what might seem to you to be otherwise bald and

unconvincing narrative. I must give you some corroborative details. I think I can do this best by describing a typical quinquennial planning process, in six of which I have actively participated on one side or other of the university-UGC divide. Let us call the first year of a new quinquennium by the symbol x . In years $x - 5$ to $x - 1$, the UGC Main Committee and many of its Sub-Committees (Mathematics, Education, Arts, Social Studies, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medicine and Dentistry, Agriculture and Veterinary, University and Industry, etc.), and possibly specific working parties such as Computer Science or Law, will have visited each unitary university and the separate parts of the large federal universities of Wales and London.

On these visits the UGC representatives will, typically, see in succession the Vice-Chancellor (President) and his or her principal administrative colleagues; representatives of the students; representatives of those concerned with student welfare, i.e. wardens of residential halls, the accommodation officer, the chaplaincy service, the careers advisory service, departmental and professional counsellors, students, etc.; the Senate (which is the academic governing body in universities with bicameral governments); non-professorial academic members of staff and sometimes non-academic staff representatives; and in a concluding meeting, the Chairman and members of the *de jure* governing body, called variously the Council in England and Wales and the Court in Scotland.

Usually not less than 14 days before the meeting is due to take place, each of these groups will have provided the UGC with papers naming topics each group wishes to discuss and elaborating upon them. For its part the UGC does not go naked into these discussions, but is armed with papers summarising the discussions which took place at the visit five years earlier, and with a mass of statistical data relating to the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students; home and overseas students; the distribution of staff and students between subjects; the income of the university from all sources; and the unused capacity, if any, of the physical plant and what would be needed by way of libraries, departmental buildings and residences for further growth. The Committee is also equipped with notes on special features: for example, where there are particular national responsibilities discharged by the universities, such as the care of the Ashmolean Museum by Oxford, the national role of the London School of Economics, the Scottish Reactor Centre, and the radio-astronomy laboratories in Manchester and Cambridge.

The style of the discussions is vitally important. The university representatives know that the UGC will not treat the visit as an inspection from which it will emerge to take decisions affecting that university. With this constraint removed, the mode of the discussions becomes conversa-

tional, frank and unfettered; each side sees the problems of the other, and questions are put and answered without inhibition. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the success of these interchanges is that each side treats them as privileged; another reason is that the UGC does not determine the level of faculty salaries or of student support.

These visits are only a part of the spectrum of the traffic between the UGC and the universities during a quinquennium. There are also many exchanges by letter and face-to-face between officers of the UGC and their opposite numbers in the universities. Vice-Chancellors frequently call at the UGC to discuss with me special problems which each faces, and two or three times a year some of the UGC members meet with representatives of the Vice-Chancellors' own forum, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, or with representatives of the Council of the Association of University Teachers. Moreover, letters are constantly issuing from the UGC advising universities of the probable effects on them of pending and actual government legislation, of the significance of reports of Royal Commissions and Committees, and of the deliberations of our own committees. These letters may or may not call for a response from the university, but in either event they serve to create within each university a body of knowledge about national considerations within which they can better assess their own plans.

In between these visits, the Committee is busy trying to develop a strategy for the following quinquennium. It studies the probable level of student demand, formulates views about subject areas which require special development (such as medicine), or which may require curtailment because of over-provision, and has discussions with Government Departments other than the Department of Education and Science, with which, of course, it has special links: the Department of Health and Social Security and the Scottish Home and Health Department on medical and social work education, or the Departments of Energy and Industry on the question of education and research for the North Sea oil industry—the list is endless.

Towards the end of the year $x - 2$, the Committee may send a general note of guidance to the universities. The part of that note which is common to all universities gives the Committee's broad view of how the years x to x plus 4 are likely to develop in terms of national trends, student numbers and other matters. The parts specific to each university may give a band of student numbers, sub-divided into science-based and arts-based undergraduate and postgraduate within which it thinks the university's own target numbers could lie. A dialogue with each university then ensues which may cause the UGC to modify its original proposals.

As a result of these processes, each university is able to formulate

realistic proposals for the next quinquennium, and to estimate the costs at current prices of new developments which it wishes to pursue. In due course these proposals are formally submitted to the UGC. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the processes leading to the preparation of a quinquennial submission are of immense benefit to each university, because all sections of each and every university take part in wide-ranging discussions involving both a stock-taking of the past and a consideration of new directions for the future.

Meanwhile, the UGC is involved in a pricing exercise during which it builds up an estimate of the cost for the whole system, i.e., the "bid" to be made to Government, and is also working on the complicated business of the allocations to be made to each university when the Government makes known what money it is prepared to give. This allocation is a complex process involving a blend of judgement and statistical work. At the end of the day, the Secretary of State for Education and Science will announce in Parliament "the University settlement," i.e., the sums of money available to the UGC in each year of the quinquennium x to $x + 4$ and, probably, the coarse-grain totals of student numbers. With the minimum of delay, the UGC then issues to each university its detailed letter of guidance with the block grant indicated for each year of the period.

Usually not all the money is distributed; some is held by the UGC in a reserve for unforeseen contingencies, and for encouraging approved educational initiatives which universities desire and propose during the quinquennium. The detailed letter of guidance very rarely earmarks a specific sum of money for a particular activity. Instead the UGC may use phrases like "we have taken full (or partial) account of your wish to develop subject alpha," or "we have made no provision for the proposed developments in subject beta." The university is free to spend its money as it wishes, knowing full well it can proceed with its plans for alpha but not for beta without sacrificing other activities. This done, the UGC breathes a large restorative sigh of relief and turns to its work programme of meetings, visitations, etc. which will culminate in the quinquennial settlement for the period $x + 5$ to $x + 9$.

I hope that by taking you on this hurried excursion over the quinquennial process, I will have helped you gain a feeling for our and the British universities' method of working. Two things remain to be said. First, the system could not work without belief in it, and a good deal of trust based on familiarity of both partners with one another, and by the development of conventions which though unwritten are not breached. Secondly, you will have perceived that the key to a national system which avoids chaos and anarchy is the agreement of the UGC on the one hand with Government on total university student numbers at the end of the

quinquennium, and on the other hand with each university on its student numbers. It follows that any so-called system of formula-financing without prior accord on numbers for which Government will pay is anathema to us. When I cannot sleep at night, my soporific is not counting sheep, but imagining myself as the Vice-President (Finance) in a State which has formula-financing, counting the students on registration day in the only meaningful terms, viz., \$1,000, \$2,000, \$3,000, \$4,000,....!

Currently both the quinquennial system and the block grant are in some disarray. The causes of this are not hard to seek. First, there is inflation at an unprecedented rate for Britain, and secondly, as in 1931, there is an economic recession. (Though I know it is of small comfort to those in universities at home, I should mention that the cutback in the block grant in 1974-75 was on a percentage basis less than that which took place in 1931.) Our domestic difficulties are not, I am sure, of any interest to this audience, and I would conclude on the optimistic note that the UGC has repeatedly stated its intention to return to long-term planning as soon as it is allowed to do so; no less than three Secretaries of State have affirmed and re-affirmed their intention to do likewise.

You are now celebrating the bicentenary of the Declaration of Independence. The body politic which you then established is, like all organisms, the product of Nature and nurture. The gene pattern embodied in the Constitution relates the parts to the whole. The constellation of oligarchies comprising the States of the Union was in the true Jeffersonian tradition, intended only to be weakly influenced from the centre so that each State could retain and develop its distinctive styles and purposes without harming the other members of the family. But in 200 years needs, purposes and attitudes change; evolution occurs, and the interaction of the centre with the periphery is subtly transmuted.

In our short existence of 57 years the UGC-university nexus has altered; the universities are larger, more numerous, and more financially dependent on Government, but genetically the UGC is unchanged. It still works to maintain the universities as great corporations which are the better and more responsive servants of the State because of the dignity and freedom which the State has conferred upon them.

I realise that I have gone on perhaps too long, and I have earned from you the rebuke of the learned Judge to the advocate who apologised to the court for his tediousness. You may wish to apply the Judge's words to me:

Sir, you have not only exhausted the patience of the Court, you have encroached upon eternity.

NOTES

1. Edward Gibbon, *The Autobiography of Edward Gibbon*, ed. Oliphant Smeaton (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1911), p. 44.
2. Ibid., p. 40.
3. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1958), p. 182.
4. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1965), p. 160.
5. Ibid., p. 159.
6. University Grants Committee, *University Development: Report on the Years 1947 to 1952* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, July 1953), p. 6.
7. Dan. 1:3-5